



NORTHERN ROCKIES COORDINATING GROUP

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Wildland Fire Update 09/10/07 – 0800

- Area closures and fire restrictions are being lifted or reduced on a case-by-case basis for parts of northern Idaho and western Montana. Visitors should continue to check with the local unit at their destination to determine the status of restrictions and closures.
- Tomorrow, fire supervisors of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes take over management of the uncontained five percent of the Jocko Lakes Fire on Flathead Reservation lands. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation retains responsibility for the rest of the fire area. While the fire is reported at 95% contained, full control will occur when a season ending weather event occurs.

Current Situation

- Since Tuesday, September 4, daily initial attack was light with 48 fires reported in the five days. One large fire was reported on September 5.
- Two large wildland fires are burning in Idaho for 142,050.
- Nine large wildland fires are currently reported in active status in Montana for 312,131 acres.
- 63 fires in Idaho, Montana and Yellowstone NP are being actively managed as Wildland Fire Use (WFU) fires to achieve resource benefits and reduce risk to firefighters. The total number of acres involved is 82,474.
- Currently assigned in the Geographic Area are four Type 2 IMTs. Other resources include 50 crews, 1,001 agency and contracted equipment such as engines, bulldozers and other equipment, and 1,438 IMT and other overhead personnel.

Risk Management

Complacency is always our worst enemy. The potential for EXTREME fire behavior is always out there on a micro scale even when the general overview is for low or moderate activity. We need to stay on top of our game to maintain our safety record and continuing to keep our firefighters and rehabilitation personnel safe. Watch for falling hazard trees and debris and continue ground and air traffic. Remember - this season is not business as usual. Despite the intermittent cooler temperatures and rainfall, ERCs are still at all time record highs in some areas. With the unforgiving fire behavior we've seen, places identified as safety zones in the past may not work now. Err on the side of safety.

Predictive Services

Upper level ridge and surface high pressure begin to build over the west for a warming and drying trend. The eastern part of the Area will see breezy west winds and seasonal temperatures. Skies should clear. Valley inversions may form Monday and Tuesday west of the Divide with possible poor relative humidity recovery. Otherwise, expect fine late summer weather. Some active fire behavior is possible Tuesday for central Idaho and southwest Montana as moderate Haines indices develop with

State of Montana

Montana Firewardens Association

Montana Division of Disaster and
Emergency Services

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Bureau of Land Management

National Park Service

US Fish and Wildlife Service

USDA Forest Service

State of Idaho

North Dakota Forest Service

dry and warm conditions. The risk of large fire growth will remain highest west of the Divide. Deep valleys may see strong inversions Monday and Tuesday. Another cold front will impact the Area Wednesday.

Fire Behavior

West of the Continental Divide expect **MODERATE** fire behavior as fuels continue to be very dry and ERCs remain very high. Monday through Wed. fire activity will become **MODERATE** to **ACTIVE** as a high pressure system pushes in over the area bringing higher temps and lower RH values. This will be especially true in areas of possible alignments of slope and wind, particularly on the south and west facing aspects. East of the Divide, expect **LOW** to **MODERATE** fire behavior to persist through the early part of next week as a result of the recent significant rain and the continued seasonable temperatures. The southern part of this area would be the only concern for early this week as we move into the high pressure, higher temps and lower RH values because this part of the region did not receive significant rainfall. A map is available at:

http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior_07.htm

Smoke

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is reporting good conditions in northern Idaho. Most Montana communities are also reporting good air quality but some intermittent inversions are expected for the next few days. Check the Montana DEQ website for local conditions and information on visibility guidelines to evaluate possible health risks and make informed activity decisions. <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/FireUpdates/index.asp>.

Resources

Most fires are transitioning to smaller organizations to reflect the long-term planning for large fire management until a season-ending event. Initial attack resources remain in place and ready to respond to any new fire starts.

Fire Restrictions and Closures

With fire activity moderating, some area closures are being reduced or lifted and fire restrictions scaled back. For specific fire restriction information:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>.

It is very important that visitors avoid closed areas for their and firefighter safety. Please contact the local land management unit for specific area closure information. For information on things to do and see in Montana and northern Idaho visit : <http://www.visitmt.com/fire/conditions.htm> or

<http://www.visitidaho.org>.

Fire Information

For further information on wildland fire activity:

www.inciweb.org

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

<http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf>